

MDTTC News



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Archive of past MDTTC Newsletters

Welcome to the sixth issue of the MDTTC News. As usual, there's lots of news to report and new and ongoing programs, and we hope to see you at some of them. As usual a special thanks to MDTTC sponsors [Butterfly](#), [Go Table Tennis](#), and [James Wu/Llewellyn realtor](#). Make sure to read my [daily table tennis blog](#) - I often write about MDTTC happenings there.

-Editor and Coach [Larry Hodges](#)

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Ongoing Programs

- ? **Beginning Junior Class.** This is for beginning juniors ages 6-13, with Coach Larry Hodges, and are held Saturdays 10:30AM-Noon and Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM. (We get more players on Sundays, so Raghu Nadmichettu assists.) See the [Group Training page](#).
- ? **Group Sessions.** While this is primarily for juniors, all ages are welcome - it's about 1/3 adults. They meet on Sat & Sun, 4:30-6:30. The first 30 minutes is practice/warm-up, then 90 minutes of matches. See the [Group Training page](#).
- ? **Private Coaching**, by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Jeffrey Zeng Xun, or Larry Hodges. (Jeffrey is currently in China, so no new lessons from him for now.) Coaching is

also available from Wang Qing Liang, Chen Bo Wen, and Raghu Nadmichettu. See [Private Coaching page](#).

- ? **Leagues.** MDTTC runs four different leagues. Take your pick! They are the [Tuesday and Friday Leagues](#) (for all ages and levels); the [Corporate League](#); and the [Elite League](#).
- ? **Christmas Camp**, Dec. 26-31. See the [Training Camp page](#) for more info.

Rental Space for Corporate and Private Events

MDTTC offers space rental for special corporate and private events. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#), and here is info on [Birthday Party Packages](#).

MDTTC Web and Facebook Pages

Don't forget to see the regularly updated [MDTTC Facebook page](#), and make sure to "like" it! Stop by and see all the photos, read the latest news, or post your own comments. Also see the [MDTTC web page](#) for regularly updated info.

Ginny's...Where East Meets West

The television program "Ginny's...Where East Meets West" did a 30-minute feature on Maryland table tennis recently, where they interviewed Wen Hsu (MDTTC officer and Nathan Hsu's mom), Barbara Wei (former member of U.S. Junior Girl's Team), and Nathan Hsu (2011 U.S. Junior Olympic Under 16 Boys' Gold Medalist). Yes, it's in English!

- ? [Part One: Wen Hsu](#) (10:23)
- ? [Part Two: Barbara Wei](#) (6:29)
- ? [Part Three: Nathan Hsu](#) (7:23)

2012-2013 MDTTC Junior Team

We would like to announce the selection of MDTTC Junior Team for 2012-2013. Criteria for the selection are listed at the end of this announcement. Congratulations to the following players: (in alphabetical order):

Lisa Cui, Tong Tong Gong, Nathan Hsu, Roy Ke, Princess Ke, Tiffany Ke, Lilly Lin, Lisa Lin, Amy Lu, Derek Nie, Anthony Qu, Crystal Wang, and Adam Yao.

MDTTC & *GoTableTennis.com* are happy to be able to provide each team player with one personalized MDTTC Team Shirts FREE (Butterfly Kiru Shirts). Additional team shirts may be purchased at cost as follows:

- Team Shirts personalized with your own name: at cost \$25 each, plus tax
- Team Shirts without your name: at cost \$16 each, plus tax.

TO ALL OTHER MDTTC MEMBERS:

MDTTC Team Shirts (Butterfly Kiru) may be purchased at \$25 each (regular at \$34.99), plus tax; \$5 extra to add a name to each shirt. Limited quantity available.

If you would like to bring your own shirts to be personalized, we'll be happy to do them for you. The cost will be \$8, plus tax. Please let us know how exactly you would like your name to appear on the back of the shirts.

The DEADLINE to place an order is NOVEMBER 9, 2012

MDTTC JUNIOR TEAM MEMBER SELECTION CRITERIA: (One of the following must be met to be considered)

- ? U.S. National Team members
- ? AAU Nationals & Junior Olympics Gold, Silver or Bronze Medals in singles events
- ? U.S. Open Champions, Finalists, or Semi-Finalists
- ? Rank in Top 15 in Age Group as of October 15, 2012

\$2600 Butterfly MDTTC October Open

By Larry Hodges

This month there were extra large trophies waiting for winners of most of the Sunday events, in addition to \$2600 in prize money mostly given out in Saturday events at the October Open at the Maryland Table Tennis Center. The larger trophies went over very well, and hopefully will attract more players in our next tournament, sometime early in 2013.

Wang Qing Liang, rated 2621, defended his title from last month, once again defeating fellow MDTTC coach Chen Bo Wen, rated 2516, in another 4-2 battle, this time at -9,10,-9,7,8,5. There's an old adage that choppers tend to get better as the match goes on as they adjust to the opponent's attack, and that's exactly what happened. By the end of the match there seemed no way to get through Wang's chopping defense, and his forehand loop was as spectacular as ever when he'd swoop in against a push or counterloop from off the table. Chen had actually spit matches with Wang at the recent Badger Open, knocking Wang's rating down from the 2642 he'd achieved mostly from making the semifinals of Men's Singles at the U.S. Open. Wang won \$1000 to Chen's \$400.

Both had semifinal battles. Former MDTTC junior star Richard Lee (rated 2424 and the long-time owner of North American Table Tennis) led 10-9 and 11-10 in the first (going for the possibly the most powerful forehand rip in the history of the universe at 11-10 that just missed) and 10-8 in the second before losing at 11,10,7,8. In the other semifinals, Larry Abass (rated 2320) came from way behind to win the first against Chen, and then made it to deuce in the fifth game, but in between it was all two-winged looping penholder Chen, winning at -9,4,5,4,10. Abass, who also used to be a big two-winged looper (but shakehand style), is now using one millimeter sponge on his backhand, which he uses to backhand loop against backspin but mostly chop against topspin. He caught both Chen and many spectators by surprise with his excellent chopping game, including Raghu Nadmichettu in the quarterfinals. Between him and Wang, the chopping game is alive and well in Maryland. Lee and Abass each pocketed \$200 for the semifinals.

Hung Duy Vo, who'd lost the final of Under 2350 last month (to Raghu Nadmichettu), mostly dominated Under 2300 this month for \$200, defeating Nasruddin Asgarali (who won \$100) in the final, -8,11,6,8, and Roy Ke (age 13, rated 2188) in the semifinals, 7,7,-7,5. Asgarali took out Lixin Lang in the semifinals, 8,-10,6,4, allowing him to return to his greatly appreciated help at the desk.

Chen Qiming won Under 2150 (\$150), 7,7,-10,-9,4 over Arsha Kuds (\$75), whose comeback from down 0-2 in games fell short. But Kuds then surprised everyone by making the quarterfinals of the Open with wins over Hung Duy Vo and Lixin Lang. Both finalists did

Houdini comebacks in the semifinals, with Chen coming back against Lilly Lin, -5,-8,7,11,6, and Kuds against Richard Bowling, -9,-7,6,9,6.

The semifinals of Under 2000 was a battle of experienced veterans against aspiring juniors, with the veterans prevailing in five as Mahesh Balagangadhar defeated Jason Wei (14), 5,-7,5,-6,8, and Gordon Gregg defeated Amy Lu (U.S. #3 Under 12 girl at 1852), 4,-8,7,-7,9. In the final, it was Balagangadhar (\$100) over Gregg (\$50) with his Seemiller grip variation that seems to give junior players so much trouble.

Mohamed Kamara won \$80 by defeating Princess Ke (\$40 for the U.S. #4 Under 12 girl at 1821 until she turned 12 in August) in the final of Under 1850, -9,6,11,-9,6.

Timothy La, with his two-winged smashing game, seems to like to go five games. This month he changed the trend from last month (where he kept losing five-gamers), to prevailing deuce in the fifth, defeating David Goldstein in the Under 1600 final, -8,7,4,-8,11, and stopping Alexander Beaulieu's comeback in the semifinals, 8,9,-9,-12,12. In the other semifinal, Goldstein defeated Kyle Wang, 3,-8,4,9, to the great relief of the control desk, since Kyle was holding up many matches by making the semifinals here, and also...

...winning Under 1350 over Michael Zangwill, 7,7,11. Kyle, 13, had a semifinal battle with Daniel Yang (12), -9,4,9,-4,6, while Zangwill defeated an exhausted Ken Chia in the other semifinals, 4,4,2. Why was Ken Chia exhausted?

Leon Bi won Under 1100, exhausting the inexhaustible Ken Chia in the final, 5,8,6. Leon, however, could only lament how he'd been in a three-way tie to advance out of both his Under 1350 and Under 1600 round robins, only to finish in third each time by a single game as two advanced. Not bad for a 12-year-old with a rating of 637 before a full summer of training!

Special thanks goes to tournament sponsors Butterfly and Llewellyn Realtor James Wu.

Results - Click on the link for a picture of the players!

Open - Final: [Wang Qing Liang d. Chen Bo Wen, -9,10,-9,7,8,5](#); **SF:** [Wang d. Richard Lee, 11,10,7,8](#); [Chen d. Larry Bass, -9,4,5,4,10](#); **QF:** Wang d. Richard Doverman, 4,10,9; Lee d. Nathan Hsu, 6,6,6; Abass d. Raghu Nadmichettu, 6,6,8; Chen d. Arsha Kuds, 8,17.

Under 2300 - Final: [Hung Duy Vo d. Nasruddin Asgarali, -8,11,6,8](#); **SF:** Vo d. Roy Ke, 7,7,-7,5; Asgarali d. Lixin Lang, 8,-10,6,4.

Under 2150 - Final: [Chen Qiming d. Arsha Kuds, 7,7,-10,-9,4](#); **SF:** Chen d. Lilly Lin, -5,-8,7,11,6; Kuds d. Richard Bowling, -9,-7,6,9,6.

Under 2000 - Final: [Mahesh Balagangadhar d. Gordon Gregg, 10,8,-10,8](#); **SF:** Balagangadhar d. Jason Wei, 5,-7,5,-6,8; Gregg d. Amy Lu, 4,-8,7,-7,9.

Under 1850 - Final: [Mohamed Kamara d. Princess Ke, -9,6,11,-9,6](#); **SF:** Kamara d. Mort Greenberg, 9,4,11; Ke d. Tony Li, 8,4,3.

Under 1600 - Final: [Timothy La d. David Goldstein, -8,7,4,-8,11](#); **SF:** La d. Alexander Beaulieu, 8,9,-9,-12,12; Goldstein d. Kyle Wang, 3,-8,4,9.

Under 1350 - Final: [Kyle Wang d. Michael Zangwill, 7,7,11](#); **SF:** Wang d. Daniel Yang, -9,4,9,-4,6; Zangwill d. Ken Chia, 4,4,2.

Under 1100 - Final: [Leon Bi d. Ken Chia, 5,8,6](#); **SF:** Bi d. Douglas Harley, 2,7,7; Chia d. Michael Borek, -4,8,-7,7,4.

TIP OF THE MONTH: How to Handle the First Loop Off Backspin

By Larry Hodges

A loop against backspin comes at you differently than one against block or topspin. At the lower levels, the loop against backspin is often the only loop they see, but as players reach the intermediate level and beyond, more and more they face loops against just about any deep ball.

And yet most players practice mostly against loops off block or (at the higher levels) counterlooping. Much of the reason for this is how easy it is to do drills where one player loops, the other blocks. You can do a continuous drill in this way, facing a loop something like every second, and rapidly become proficient at blocking (or at higher levels, counterlooping) such loops.

And then someone loops against your backspin in a match (usually off a push or a long backspin serve), and you miss. Why?

Three things that make a loop against backspin different

First, a loop against backspin usually has more topspin than other loops. This is because the looper is adding to the spin that's already there, i.e. using your backspin. The spinniest loops are those against the spinniest backspins.

Second, a loop against backspin is usually (not always) done closer to the table than a loop against a block or topspin. Most blocks and topspins force the opponent off the table, both in games and in drills. So you both have less time to react, and your opponent has more angle against you.

Third, since the loop against backspin is usually both spinier and done closer to the table than other loops, the trajectory of the ball is different. A slow, spinny loop against backspin often has more arc than other loops, which can throw off your timing. It also means you have to adjust your contact point. Against a more driving loop (i.e. less arc), you can just stick your racket out and let the ball come to you. Against a more arcing loop, you need to get your racket closer to where the ball hits the table or it'll bounce up, forcing you to lift your racket to react - and probably lifting the ball off the end.

How do you handle such a loop differently?

When blocking, take it quick off the bounce, with a slight jabbing motion at contact. You need to block somewhat aggressively or the ball's spin will jump off your racket. The harder you hit it, the less the spin will take. However, the harder you hit it, the less control you'll have, so you have to find a balance. You can also block less aggressively with a more closed racket (to compensate for how the ball will jump off your racket), relying on the softness of your shot to give the ball more time to drop as well as to throw off an opponent's timing, if he's using too more aggressive blocks, but if you do this too often opponent's will jump all over them.

When smashing or counterlooping against a loop against backspin, take the ball at the top of the bounce or even on the rise. This is where many players face problems as they are better doing this when the opponent loops from farther off the table, giving them more time. With less time, they are often late smashing or counterlooping. So the key here is not to hesitate. If you hesitate even slightly when attacking a slow, spinny loop, you will probably miss.

When counterlooping, make sure to loop nearly the very top of the ball. Any major lifting motion will send the ball off the end. You lift more when from off the table because the ball has more distance to travel, and so more time for the topspin and gravity to pull it down. Not so when looping against slow, spinny loop against backspin.

In general, against a loop that lands short, block aggressively, or smash or counterloop. Against a loop that lands deep, still play aggressive, but focus on control.

How to practice against a loop against backspin

Too often players only face loops against backspin in a game, and so they might get to practice it once every few minutes. If they do drill against it, it's a drill where one player starts off the drill with a loop against backspin and then they continue the drill (or free play), and again you only limited practice against this type of loop. What would be more valuable is a systematic way of practicing against this type of loop where you could do so over and over, like a multiball drill. Except a coach can't feed the type of topspin you see in a spinny loop against backspin.

Or can he? Here's an improvised multiball drill where you can face a loop against backspin over and over, and practice blocking, smashing, or counterlooping it, depending on your playing style and level.

First, get a box of balls, and set them on a chair or other stand near the table. The first player grabs a ball and serves backspin. The second player pushes it back to a pre-set spot. The first player loops. While the second player practices against this loop against backspin, the first player is already reaching for another ball from the box. **DO NOT PLAY THE POINT OUT.** Instead, the first player only serve and loops, and then grabs a new ball to do it again. The second player alternates pushing and practicing against the loop against backspin.

The result is one player gets lots of rapid-fire practice looping against backspin, while the other gets lots of rapid-fire practice against loops against backspin, with the added bonus of practicing his push. (Take that part seriously and your push will also improve.)

There are four variation of this drill.

1. Variation One: the first player always loops to the second player's forehand.
2. Variation Two: the first player always loops to the second player's backhand.
3. Variation Three: the first player loops randomly either to the second player's forehand or backhand.
4. Variation Four: the first player loops randomly to all parts of the table.

The first two variations allow you to focus on developing your technique against loops against backspin. The third one is your stepping stone to toward doing it in a match situation, where it's simplified to just two possibilities. Ultimately, you need to get to the fourth variation, as that lets you rapid-fire practice what you'll face in a match - but if you can't do that consistently yet, then focus on the first three variations until you are ready for number four. So pick out the variation where you need the most work, and go practice!